

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action of January 30, 2004, has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Claims 1 and 17 have been amended, and claims 4, 20, and 33-37 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-3, 5-19, and 21-32 thus remain pending in this application. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the specification, namely, the Abstract. Applicants herein amend the Abstract as requested by the Office Action, and also reduce the Abstract to the Office's requested limit of 150 words.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Office for the indication that claims 4, 9-10, 20, and 25-26 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present amendment, Applicants amend independent claim 1 to incorporate the allowable features of now canceled claim 4. Applications also amend independent claim 17 to incorporate the allowable features of now canceled claim 20. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-3, 5-19, and 21-32 are therefore in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5-8, 11-19, 21-24, and 27-37 each stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103. These rejections are mooted in view of the present amendment whereby Applicants cancel claims 33-37 and amend claims 1 and 17 to include allowable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

All rejections having been addressed, applicant respectfully submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicits prompt notification of the same. However, if for any reason the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for


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Reply to Office Action of January 30, 2004

allowance or there are any questions, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at
(202) 824-3153.

Respectfully submitted,

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THJ/RAD/mmd